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Representative Michael Debrow, Chair  
Members

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

Re: Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC)

My name is Neil Bryant. I have practiced law in Bend, Oregon for almost forty years. From 1993- 2001, I had the honor to serve as the Senator for Central Oregon (District 27). On July 1, 2012, I was appointed to the HECC and have served as the vice-chairperson. I co-chaired the work group which issued the Report on Western Governors University (WGU). I believe you have copies of the report, but let me summarize the findings and conclusions:

- In order to reach the 40-40-20 goal, there must be new approaches to degree attainment.
- WGU offers a successful, competency based approach which is less expensive because the delivery is online and offers a flexible schedule.
- WGU is accredited in all 50 states and has an agreement with the Oregon Community Colleges.
- Most Oregon public and private universities have capacity for new students.
- Eastern Oregon University is the leader in online courses in Oregon. All of the online courses from Oregon colleges and universities receive high marks.
- Oregon needs to complete an analysis of the specific needs that are not being met and determine the role for online competency based degrees. How does one analyze competency/proficiency based education? How does one measure the quality of the programs?

Recommendations:

1. Continue the current relationship with WGU.
2. Create a web portal for all accredited, campus based and online courses. This is in process. It must provide a "one-step" place for students to understand their options and available credits.
3. The legislature and governor need to decide if the Oregon Opportunity Grant is open to all students taking accredited courses, whether or not the college is located within the state. Complete the analysis of the need and quality of all courses and determine measurements.

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4. Online education will accelerate in Oregon, the country, and the world. How should it be encouraged or discouraged?
5. WGU offers a competency based education which is well received in Washington State and should be monitored in Oregon.

What would you like the HECC to do?

I am happy to answer your questions.

Sincerely,



Neil R. Bryant

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